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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice: 7831]

NOTIFICATION OF THE NEXT CAFTA-DR ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL MEETING AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE MEETING AGENDA

AGENCY: Department of State

ACTION: Notice of the CAFTA-DR Environmental Affairs Council meeting and request for comments on the meeting agenda.

SUMMARY: The Department of State and the Office of the United States Trade Representative are providing notice that the government parties to the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR) intend to hold the sixth meeting of the Environmental Affairs Council (Council) established under Chapter 17 of that agreement in San Pedro Sula, Honduras on April 12, 2012 at the Hilton Princess Hotel, 10 Calle y Ave. Circunvalación, S.O. Col. Trejo. All interested persons are invited to attend a public session beginning at 2:30 pm on April 12.

During the meeting, each Council Member will present their country's progress in implementing Chapter 17 obligations and on the impacts of environmental cooperation in their countries. The Council will also receive a presentation from

the CAFTA-DR Secretariat for Environmental Matters (SEM) and discuss the Organization of American States Third Evaluation Report: Monitoring Progress of the Environmental Cooperation Agenda in the CAFTA-DR Countries. For the public session of the meeting, the Council will highlight issues from the above discussion elements with a particular focus on Chapter 17 obligations and environmental cooperation successes.

All interested persons are invited to attend a public session where they will have the opportunity to ask questions and discuss implementation of Chapter 17 and environmental cooperation with Council Members. In addition, the SEM will present on the citizen submission process established under Chapter 17. More information on the Council is included below under Supplementary Information.

The Department of State and Office of the United States Trade Representative invite written comments or suggestions regarding the meeting agenda. In preparing comments, we encourage submitters to refer to Chapter 17 of the CAFTA-DR, the Final Environmental Review of the CAFTA-DR and the Agreement among the CAFTA-DR countries on Environmental Cooperation (ECA) (*all documents available at*

<http://www.state.gov/e/oes/env/trade/caftadr/index.htm>).

DATES: To be assured of timely consideration, all written comments or suggestions are requested no later than April 6, 2012.

ADDRESSES: Written comments or suggestions should be submitted to both: (1) Rebecca Slocum, U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Office of Environmental Policy by e-mail to SlocumRB@state.gov with the subject line “CAFTA-DR EAC Meeting” or by fax to (202) 647-5947; and (2) Kelly Milton, Director for International Environmental and Conservation Policy, Office of the United States Trade Representative by e-mail to KMilton@ustr.eop.gov with the subject line “CAFTA-DR EAC Meeting” or by fax to (202) 395-9517. If you have access to the Internet you can view and comment on this notice by going to: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!/home> and searching on docket number DOS-2012-0023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Rebecca Slocum, (202) 647-4828 or Kelly Milton, (202) 395-9590.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Article 17.5 of the CAFTA-DR establishes an Environmental Affairs Council (the Council). Article 17.5 requires the Council to meet to oversee the implementation of, and review progress under, Chapter 17. Article 17.5 further requires, unless the governments otherwise agree, that each meeting of the Council include a session in which members of the Council have an opportunity to meet with the public to discuss matters relating to the implementation of Chapter 17.

In Article 17.9 of the CAFTA-DR, the governments recognize the importance of strengthening capacity to protect the environment and to promote sustainable development in concert with strengthening trade and investment relations and state their commitment to expanding their cooperative relationship on environmental matters. Article 17.9 also references the ECA, which sets out certain priority areas of cooperation on environmental activities that are also reflected in Annex 17.9 of the CAFTA-DR. These priority areas include, among other things: reinforcing institutional and legal frameworks and the capacity to develop, implement, administer, and enforce environmental laws, regulations, standards and policies; conserving and managing shared, migratory and endangered species in international trade and management of protected areas; promoting best practices leading to sustainable management of the environment; and facilitating technology development and transfer and training to promote clean production technologies. The public is advised to refer to the State Department website at <http://www.state.gov/e/oes/env/> and the USTR website at www.ustr.gov for more information.

Disclaimer: This Public Notice is a request for comments and suggestions, and is not a request for applications. No granting of money is directly associated with this request for suggestions on the Council meeting agenda. There is no

expectation of resources or funding associated with any comments or suggestions for the agenda.

March 20, 2012

Date

Sezaneh M. Seymour,

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